

**Inspection under Section 28 of the
Education Act 2005**

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Victoria Primary School
Lower Harpers Road, Abersychan
Pontypool, NP4 8PW**

School Number: 6782115

Date of Inspection: 09/06/08

by

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Date of Publication: 11/08/08

Under Estyn contract number: 1123207

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Victoria Primary School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Victoria Primary School took place between 09/06/08 and 11/06/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Michael T. Ridout undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	many important shortcomings

There are three types of inspection.

For **all** inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject reports.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports on all subjects.

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

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Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Victoria Primary is a community school for boys and girls aged four to eleven years. In total there are 227 full-time equivalent (fte) pupils on roll organised in eight classes. Children under five are taught in one class. The average class size is 28. There are 9.8 fte teachers, including the head teacher and three part-time unqualified teachers. There are seven learning support assistants (LSAs).
- 2 The school is situated in the small town of Abersychan, near Pontypool. Most children attending the school live in the locality that is described as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Fifteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is well below national and local averages. A small number of pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority. There are a few pupils from ethnic minorities. None come from homes where Welsh is the first language. English is the predominant language spoken and the school teaches Welsh as a second language.
- 3 Baseline assessments indicate that children's attainment on entry to reception covers the full range and is generally in line, and in some aspects above local averages. Subsequent assessments indicate a number have high attainments. Around 19 per cent of pupils have special educational needs (SEN). This is a similar proportion to that found in most primary schools. Five pupils have a statement of SEN.
- 4 The school was previously inspected in April 2002. Since that time, the number on roll has increased and the number and organisation of classes has been changed. Improvements have been made to the outdoor learning environment and provision in ICT enhanced. The current head teacher took up her post in September 2004 and there have been some further changes in personnel. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark (2008) and is recognised as an Eco School.

The school's priorities and targets

- 5 The statements: 'Making our best even better' and 'Caring, sharing, love of life and learning' guide the work of the school and reflect the school's mission statement and aims that are published in the prospectus.
- 6 The school development plan (SDP) for the current year identifies a number of key priorities to:
 - develop a whole school approach to 'assessment for learning';
 - 'narrow the gap' by raising the achievements of underperforming pupils;
 - develop a culture of inclusion;
 - implement the new skills curriculum in KS2;
 - review provision in Welsh as a second language, science, information technology, art and music, and for bilingualism and the Cwricwlwm Cymreig;
 - implement the Foundation Phase; and
 - improve communication with parents.

Summary

- 7 During their time at Victoria Primary School pupils attain good overall standards in their personal and academic development. The clear direction provided by the head teacher in developing the quality of education is an exemplar although current initiatives have yet to become securely and consistently established.

Table of grades awarded

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	Grade 2
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	Grade 3
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	Grade 3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	Grade 2
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	Grade 2
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	Grade 3
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	Grade 2

- 8 The inspection team agrees with the school's self-evaluation in Key question 1. In contrast it awards one grade lower in Key questions 2, 4, 5 and 7 and two grades lower in Key questions 3, 6.

Standards

- 9 In twenty-four lessons or parts of lessons in the subjects and areas inspected standards were judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
-	63%	25%	12%	-

- 10 These figures are similar to the last inspection in 2002. They are below the 2010 Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) target that the quality of learning should be Grade 3 or better in 98 per cent of lessons and below those published in the Annual Report 2006-2007 of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI), where standards in primary schools in Wales were reported to be Grade 2 in 70 per cent of lessons and Grade 1 in 10 per cent.
- 11 The overall quality of educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

12 The under-fives make good progress in the acquisition of key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) and develop bilingual skills very well.

13 Standards in the six areas of learning for the under-fives were judged as follows:

Area of learning:	Reception
Language, literacy and communication	Grade 2
Personal and social development	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2

14 In the five subjects inspected in both key stages standards were judged as follows:

Subject:	Key stage 1	Key stage 2
Mathematics	Grade 2	Grade 2
Science	Grade 2	Grade 2
Design and technology	Grade 3	Grade 3
Music	Grade 2	Grade 2
Religious education	Grade 3	Grade 3

15 Strengths outweigh shortcomings in pupils' achievement in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Their competence in bilingual skills is generally good.

16 In 2007, the results of National Curriculum (NC) teacher assessments in KS1 were below national figures in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools having more than eight per cent and less than sixteen per cent free school meals, standards in KS1 were average in English and well below average in mathematics and science.

17 In KS2 the 2007 NC results were well above national figures in all three subjects. In comparison with similar schools results were well above average in English and mathematics and average in science.

18 Since the last inspection in 2002 NC results indicate the maintenance of good overall standards in KS2. In KS1 overall results have remained below average.

19 Progress fluctuates across both key stages. Pupils with SEN make appropriate progress but the progress of more able pupils is sometimes limited.

20 Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. A clear code of conduct exists and pupils understand what is expected of them. They work well co-operatively and opportunities for them to work with greater independence are being developed.

21 Attendance rates for the past three terms average 93.5 per cent, which is above national rates and in line with other primary schools within the local authority. Despite the school's considerable efforts a few pupils arrive late for the start of the school day and this often disrupts learning.

- 22 Pupils' personal, social, moral and wider development is good.
- 23 Pupils have a growing appreciation of diversity and express a clear understanding of equal opportunities issues. They develop an appropriate understanding of the workplace and are well prepared for effective participation in the local community.

The quality of education and training

- 24 In thirty-six lessons or parts of lessons the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
-	55%	39%	6%	-

- 25 These figures are similar to the last inspection in 2002. They are well below the WAG target for teaching to be grade 2 or better in 80 per cent of lessons by 2010 and also well below the national picture as reported in HMCI's Annual Report 2006 – 2007 where the quality of teaching is reported to be Grade 2 or better in 80 per cent of lessons with 14 per cent having outstanding features.
- 26 Teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) establish good working relationships with pupils and where teaching is rigorous this results in good levels of achievement.
- 27 The quality of teaching and support provided for the under-fives is consistently good.
- 28 Across both key stages there is variation in the quality of teaching. The good impact of teaching is most consistent in lower KS2 and is also good in other classes where high expectations result in a brisk pace and pupils working productively.
- 29 The characteristics of less effective lessons include insufficiently challenging tasks, especially for more able pupils, and a lack of focus on new learning and skills in the subject so that pupils are well motivated to achieve their best.
- 30 Strengths outweigh shortcomings in the rigour of assessment and its use in improving the effectiveness of learning. Assessment arrangements are good but although teachers mark work with positive comments, the practice of setting targets for pupils to improve their work is not yet firmly established.
- 31 End of year reports in English, mathematics and science are suitably detailed. The school is currently working to ensure more detailed information is provided in other subjects and that the targets for further improvement are more precise.
- 32 The school is developing its curricular provision well and is increasingly successful in meeting the aspirations and needs of the full range of pupils. The provision is broad and generally well balanced although shortcomings in implementing schemes of work limit progression in pupils' learning in some subjects.
- 33 The under-fives are well catered for, the provision in KS1 reflects well the philosophy of the Foundation Phase and in KS2 pupils have equal access to a broad curriculum.

However, across both key stages the provision is not sufficiently consistent in promoting key skills and meeting the needs of more able pupils.

- 34 The development of pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good and a good range of extra curricular activities and well planned educational visits enhance pupils' learning well.
- 35 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This reflects effective implementation of a well-structured programme for personal and social educational (PSE).
- 36 The school is working to strengthen further its partnership with parents and has positive partnerships with other schools and education providers and productive links with the local community.
- 37 The overall quality of pastoral care, support and guidance to pupils is good with appropriate attention to their well-being. The monitoring of behaviour, attendance, and punctuality is effective.
- 38 The governing body (GB) has clear procedures for promoting pupils' well-being, health and safety. However, the inspection team identified some potential health and safety issues; these have been discussed with the head teacher and governors.
- 39 The quality of provision for additional learning needs, including SEN, is good.
- 40 The overall provision to promote equal opportunities is good. The school has a good awareness of the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and needs and strives to be an inclusive community. This is well reflected in the overall provision of pastoral support but the effectiveness of educational guidance for more-able pupils is not as well developed.

Leadership and management

- 41 The head teacher with the strong support of governors provides clear direction, strong values and a renewed vision for whole school improvement.
- 42 Rigorous managerial systems provide a good framework to promote the full and effective involvement of members of staff in realising the objectives and targets in the SDP. However, the impact of leadership roles as a whole remains uneven.
- 43 The GB is strongly supportive of the school and has a broad overview of the quality of education it provides. Through the review of policies and the provision of updated information for parents it ensures compliance with statutory requirements.
- 44 The head teacher is very well informed about the school's performance but although the arrangements for self-evaluation and planning for improvement are good they have yet to impact consistently across the school.
- 45 Strengths outweigh shortcomings in improvement since the last inspection in 2002. The positive impact of recent initiatives is evident in major improvements to the outdoor environment and to the provision in KS1, in line with the Foundation Phase.

- 46 The provision of staff and learning resources is good and the accommodation provides a suitable setting for effective learning and teaching. Taken overall, efficient use is made of most resources. However, the deployment of support staff and the use of ICT resources do not consistently enhance standards.
- 47 Taking into account the maintenance of good standards in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection and the increasingly positive impact of the head teachers' drive, vision and commitment in encouraging members of staff to improve learning and teaching further, the school provides value for money.

Recommendations

- 48 The school and the GB, with the support of appropriate agencies should continue to implement the SDP and work to:
- R1 raise standards further in key skills and in design and technology and religious education;
 - R2 improve the progress and achievement of more able pupils;
 - R3 improve the consistency of learning and teaching;
 - R4 implement schemes of work fully to ensure appropriate progression in knowledge and skills;
 - R5 continue to promote the full and effective involvement of members of staff in realising the objectives and targets in the SDP.

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

49 The findings of the inspection team match the judgement made by the school in its self-evaluation report. This reflects the maintenance of good standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

50 In twenty-four lessons or parts of lessons in the subjects and areas inspected standards were judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
-	63%	25%	12%	-

51 These figures are similar to the last inspection in 2002. They are below the 2010 WAG target that the quality of learning should be Grade 3 or better in 98 per cent of lessons and below those published in HMCI's Annual Report 2006-2007, where standards in primary schools in Wales were reported to be Grade 2 in 70 per cent of lessons and Grade 1 in 10 per cent.

52 The overall quality of educational provision for the under-fives is appropriate to their needs and children make good progress towards the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning.

53 The under-fives make a good start in the acquisition of basic and key skills in communication, numeracy and ICT, and they develop initial bilingual skills very well.

54 Standards in the six areas of learning for the under-fives were judged as follows:

Area of learning:	Reception
Language, literacy and communication	Grade 2
Personal and social development	Grade 2
Mathematical development	Grade 2
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Grade 2
Creative development	Grade 2
Physical development	Grade 2

55 In the five subjects inspected in both key stages standards were judged as follows:

Subject:	Key stage 1	Key stage 2
Mathematics	Grade 2	Grade 2
Science	Grade 2	Grade 2
Design and technology	Grade 3	Grade 3
Music	Grade 2	Grade 2
Religious education	Grade 3	Grade 3

- 56 Standards in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are good in both key stages. The majority attains at least the nationally expected level in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Standards in science and music have improved since the last inspection but there are some shortcomings in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in design and technology and religious education.
- 57 Strengths outweigh shortcomings in pupils' achievement in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Speaking, listening and reading skills are generally well developed but the standards achieved in using the skills of writing, numeracy and ICT are variable. Although many pupils have good skills in these areas the impact on achievement in other subjects is limited.
- 58 The level of competence in bilingual skills is generally good. This was most evident during the inspection in lower KS2 where pupils confidently used a good vocabulary in both English and Welsh.
- 59 Pupils achieve similar standards irrespective of their social, ethnic or linguistic background.
- 60 In 2007, the results of the NC teacher assessments in KS1 were below national figures in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools having more than eight per cent and less than sixteen per cent free school meals, standards in KS1 were average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils attaining at least the expected level 2 in all three subjects was about average.
- 61 In KS2 the 2007 results of the NC teacher assessments were well above national figures in all three subjects. In comparison with similar schools results were well above average in English and mathematics and average in science. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected level 4 in all three subjects was well above average.
- 62 Since the last inspection in 2002 NC results indicate the maintenance of good overall standards in KS2 with an improving trend over the last three years. Results fluctuate from year to year, due in part to the proportion of pupils with SEN. In both key stages the trend since 2002 is broadly flat with results in KS1 remaining below average.
- 63 The school is successful in meeting or exceeding its end of key stage targets for attainment. Analysis of the data for 2007 indicates that girls perform less well than boys in KS1. In KS2 the overall performance of boys and girls is similar but in attainment at level 5 girls significantly outperform boys.
- 64 Good progress is evident where pupils are involved fully in learning, such as in practical tasks in mathematics, science and music, although as pupils move through the school progress is variable. The good progress of the under-fives in the acquisition of knowledge and skills reflects well the good levels of attainment indicated in baseline assessments. Progress fluctuates across both key stages.
- 65 Pupils with SEN make appropriate progress towards the targets set for them in individual education plans (IEPs) but the progress of more able pupils is sometimes limited.

- 66 Pupils have a sound understanding of their learning tasks and increasing discussion of assessment strategies is beginning to help them understand how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
- 67 In general pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education but more able pupils are not always enabled to achieve their potential.
- 68 Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. A clear code of conduct exists and pupils understand what is expected of them. They enjoy positive relationships with teaching and support staff, and are friendly and welcoming to visitors.
- 69 Pupils' good behaviour is evident in lessons, during morning worship, in their playground games, at meal times and in their orderly movement around the school. Pupils are proud of their school and treat the buildings and grounds with respect.
- 70 Pupils have positive attitudes to learning; they are interested in their work and are keen to contribute in lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers, settle quickly to tasks and sustain concentration to the best of their abilities. Pupils take pride in their achievements and know their efforts and work are valued.
- 71 Attendance rates for the past three terms average 93.5 per cent, which is above national rates of attendance for pupils of compulsory school age and in line with other primary schools within the local authority. Despite the school's considerable efforts a few pupils arrive late for the start of the school day; this often disrupts classes and these pupils miss important parts of the first lesson of the day.
- 72 Registration is conducted efficiently and lessons start promptly. The school complies with all WAG statutory requirements with regard to attendance.
- 73 Pupils' capacity to work independently is developing well. When given the opportunity pupils organise themselves well. They work well co-operatively in pairs and small groups, sharing the tasks and ensuring everyone makes a contribution.
- 74 In the reception class children are developing the skills to work independently and are encouraged to make their own choices and decisions. They are confident and eager to explore new learning situations.
- 75 Pupils' personal, social, moral and wider development is good. The supportive relationships that pupils enjoy with staff, the sensitive moral and spiritual content of collective worship and the high priority given to the development of social skills enables pupils to develop a secure set of moral and personal values to guide them.
- 76 Pupils demonstrate care, concern and respect for others and have a growing appreciation of the diversity of beliefs and cultural traditions within society. In discussion, pupils express a clear understanding of equal opportunities issues and feel strongly that everyone should be treated fairly and without discrimination.
- 77 Pupils are well prepared for effective participation in the life and work of the local community. Governors, staff and pupils work in close partnership with the local community and support a range of community initiatives and activities.

The quality of education and training

Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

78 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question Grade 1. This is because inspectors found greater variation in teaching and the use of assessments than the school judged to be the case.

79 In thirty-six lessons or parts of lessons the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
-	55%	39%	6%	-

80 These figures are similar to the last inspection in 2002. They are well below the WAG target for teaching to be grade 2 or better in 80 per cent of lessons by 2010 and also well below the national picture as reported in HMCI's Annual Report 2006 – 2007 where the quality of teaching is reported to be Grade 2 or better in 80 per cent of lessons with 14 per cent having outstanding features.

81 The quality of teaching and support provided for the under-fives is consistently good. The provision is well planned, a good range of teaching strategies is used, day-to-day assessments are used well and teamwork is evident.

82 Across both key stages there is some variation in the quality of teaching. Teaching is most consistent in lower KS2 and is effective in all classes where pupils are involved fully in the learning tasks, high expectations are set and activities have a brisk pace.

83 The characteristics of less effective lessons include insufficiently challenging tasks, especially for more able pupils, a slow pace and a lack of rigour and subject focus in teaching so that pupils are well motivated to achieve their best.

84 Teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) establish good working relationships with pupils across the school and where teaching is rigorous this results in good levels of achievement.

85 Recent training ensures that teachers have a good knowledge of best practice in primary education. For example, they are increasingly implementing assessment for learning strategies across the school and in KS1 a clear focus on skills based learning is being developed.

86 In general planning identifies broad learning objectives for lessons but these are not always clearly explained to pupils and the content of the learning is not always broken down so that pupils of different abilities can progressively build up their skills.

- 87 Taken overall teachers use an appropriate range of teaching methods and organisational strategies. Where the learning is stimulating and pupils feel motivated they work productively. In effective lessons, for example in mathematics with pupils in Year 3 and Year 4, the guidance for group tasks was clear and teaching was well focused in line with pupils' differing levels of understanding. Furthermore, good use of questioning and of plenary sessions to review learning helped to consolidate pupils' learning well.
- 88 Where lessons have shortcomings, teaching is over directed, exposition is too long and the range of work does not actively engage pupils. On occasions during the inspection there was too much emphasis on the use of particular teaching approaches at the expense of developing the content of the scheme of work.
- 89 Teaching promotes equal opportunity well in terms of access to the learning tasks provided and is proactive in addressing issues of gender, race and disability equality.
- 90 Taken overall teaching provides well for the language needs of learners. The consistency of bilingual teaching is a particularly good feature in lower KS2.
- 91 Teaching monitors and reviews pupils' progress appropriately but is often less effective in tailoring learning to pupils' differing needs and capabilities. Scrutiny of teachers' records indicates that evaluations of progress are seldom recorded and the lessons observed indicate that too little use is made of evaluations of previous learning to adapt subsequent tasks in line with pupils' differing abilities and needs.
- 92 Strengths outweigh shortcomings in the rigour of assessment and its use in planning and improving the quality and effectiveness of learning.
- 93 The rigour of assessment for the under-fives is good. Baseline results are used very well to guide intervention strategies to support children's needs. In both key stages standardised tests and a range of assessment materials, supported by skills ladders related to NC levels, are used to help ensure pupils' progress is assessed accurately. The data is collated, analysed and the results used to group pupils in English and mathematics, for example. However, the extent to which data are used to ensure the challenge of work matches the needs of more able pupils in particular is variable and the implementation of skills ladders is at an early stage of development.
- 94 The school's arrangements for assessment, including baseline assessments and end of key stage teacher assessments, meet statutory requirements. Teachers have undertaken appropriate exercises in moderating assessments in relation to NC criteria and this has improved the accuracy and consistency of teacher assessments.
- 95 The school has a marking policy that is made known to pupils. However, although teachers mark work with positive comments, the practice of setting targets or goals for pupils to improve their work is not yet firmly established. The school is developing self-assessment and peer marking strategies to improve pupils' understanding of assessment and the next step in their learning.

- 96 Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. An informative handbook about assessment is provided annually and parents have formal opportunities to see their children's books and discuss progress with the class teacher during the autumn and spring terms. A written report is sent to parents at the end of the summer term and opportunity to discuss reports with the class teacher is offered. Reporting in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is suitably detailed. The school is currently working to ensure more detailed information is provided in other subjects and that targets for further improvement are more precise.

Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 97 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question Grade 1. Many good features were identified but some shortcomings remain in promoting key skills and ensuring appropriate progression in some subjects.
- 98 The school is developing its curricular provision well and is increasingly successful in meeting the aspirations and needs of the full range of pupils. The under-fives are particularly well catered for, the provision in KS1 reflects well the philosophy of the Foundation Phase and in KS2 pupils have equal access to the full range of activities provided. However, across both key stages the provision is not sufficiently consistent in meeting the needs of more able pupils.
- 99 The school provides a broad and generally well-balanced curriculum that meets legal requirements. The overall quality of policies and schemes of work is good. The provision for under-fives reflects well the Desirable Learning Outcomes across the six areas of learning but across both key stages the implementation of schemes of work is inconsistent and this limits progression in pupils' learning. This is particularly evident in design and technology and religious education.
- 100 The school is very well prepared for the introduction of the Foundation Phase and the skills based curriculum in KS2. There is very good emphasis on developing a skill based approach in delivering the curriculum. The introduction of well-structured skills ladders to guide learning and teaching is a very positive development and their effective use is becoming established.
- 101 The development of pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good. The school is developing a skills based approach to planning and key skills are highlighted in weekly plans but the opportunities identified lack sufficient detail and as a result the promotion of key skills is not fully embedded across the school.
- 102 The school provides a good range of extra curricular activities with strong emphasis on the sporting and artistic fields. Appropriate to age all pupils have access to these activities and older pupils express enjoyment from competing in inter school activities and in local eisteddfods. Educational visits, including a residential visit to London for

pupils in Y6, and regular visits for all pupils to sites of educational interest enhance the pupils learning well. The school also welcomes visits to school from artistic, sporting and community guests. These experiences contribute well to broadening pupils' knowledge and skills.

- 103 The provision for pupils' personal development is good. This reflects the school's strong commitment to implementing consistently its well-structured framework for PSE.
- 104 Spiritual development is well promoted in both religious and aesthetic activities and appropriate time for guided reflection is given in daily acts of collective worship. Good provision is made for social development and this is evident in pupils' positive attitudes, with older ones being supportive of younger ones. The adults in the school are good role models in respect of the values that they promote. The emphasis on moral development is good so that pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. This is especially evident in the crowded play areas and during movement around the school when pupils generally show care and respect for each other. Cultural awareness is well promoted through for example, a number of contacts around the world including in Hong Kong and Africa and pupils' awareness of their own culture is developed through attending eisteddfods and other special events in the area.
- 105 Overall the school's partnerships with parents, the community, other schools and higher education institutions are good and continue to develop well. The development of an effective partnership with parents remains a priority in the SDP and staff are working diligently to enhance partnership with parents and keep them well informed about the life and work of the school.
- 106 Most parents are supportive of the school and express satisfaction with the aims and values that the school promotes. Parents help out in the classroom, support pupils on educational visits and contribute to fundraising. The active parent and teacher association (PTA) organises social and fundraising events that enhance links with the local community and provides the school with a valuable source of additional income.
- 107 The school enjoys positive partnerships with other schools in its 'cluster' group and with the main receiving secondary school in particular. Pastoral, administrative and curriculum liaison is well established and there is a well-focused transition plan in place which contributes positively to the continuity and progression of pupils' education as they move from KS2 to KS3.
- 108 The school has established successful partnerships with several institutes of higher and further education and provides training facilities for student teachers and students undertaking childcare and vocational qualifications. Students from local secondary schools regularly undertake work-experience placements at the school. All students are well supported by staff and they make a positive contribution to the life of the school.
- 109 There are productive links with the local community. Educational visits and the expertise of members of the local community make a positive contribution to pupils' motivation and learning in a number of subject areas.

- 110 The learning experiences provided respond well to the needs of employers and the community.
- 111 The provision for work related education is good and is an integral part of pupils' learning. The school successfully promotes pupils' understanding of the world of work through educational visits to a range of retail, commercial and industrial sites in the locality and further afield. Pupils gain a good understanding of different working environments and the variety of work opportunities available. Teachers give due attention to the vocational aspect of the PSE programme and pupils receive visits from a range of personnel linked to different occupations and professions.
- 112 The school enjoys productive working relationships with the Education Business Partnership (EBP) and with Careers Wales. Teachers have undertaken a wide range of relevant business placements, which have enhanced professional development and enriched curriculum provision for pupils.
- 113 The languages, culture and heritage of Wales are reflected well in the life of the school. Pupils' bilingual skills are promoted well in some classes although the provision during the inspection was inconsistent. A sense of pride in being Welsh is fostered successfully through for example a Welsh Week which celebrates the arts in Wales and its history, dancing in the Gwyl Plant and the celebration of World Book Day when staff and pupils dress up as characters from Welsh stories and books. Throughout the year the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is well established through the study of Welsh history, literature and music. Older pupils celebrate their heritage, stating for example that they feel pride when they read the words "Croeso I Gymru" after crossing the Severn Bridge.
- 114 The school successfully promotes equal opportunities, tackles social disadvantage and challenges stereotypes. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and all other facilities in the school.
- 115 The standards in, and provision for education for sustainable development and global citizenship (ESDGC) are good. The school makes good efforts to act in a sustainable way and pupils understand the need to conserve energy and water consumption and are involved in re-cycling, composting and waste minimisation schemes. Their understanding of environmental and conservation issues is good and they are justly proud of their involvement in the development of their school grounds.
- 116 The school's commitment to global citizenship is good. The successful partnerships established with schools in China and the United States of America enables pupils to have a truly international understanding of the lives of children in different countries and how global forces shape their lives.
- 117 As part of the *Eco schools award scheme*, the school has received the bronze and silver awards in recognition of its commitment to conservation and the environment and is working towards achieving the European Green Flag.

- 118 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the development of pupils' entrepreneurial skills. Pupils' skills are promoted by opportunities to contribute to decision-making and problem-solving through their involvement in the school council, eco committee and the Playground Pals initiative and they are committed and enthusiastic in their approach. However, opportunities to become involved in enterprise activities and the running of a simple business within the school are underdeveloped.
- 119 The school is committed to lifelong learning and national priorities are well reflected in its life and work. Children and parents value the 'wrap around' provision offered through the breakfast club, after school club and the range of after-school activities. Pupils are aware of their own community and understand how they can contribute to its regeneration and success through citizenship, partnership with others and through care for the environment.

Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 120 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question Grade 1. The inspection team did not identify outstanding features but found many good and some very good features that reflect the characteristics of a good school with a positive ethos of mutual respect.
- 121 The school plans and manages care arrangements and the contribution of support services well. Appropriate liaison is established with social services in the case of 'looked after' pupils. The school offers breakfast and after school care and works closely with appropriate outside agencies to ensure the well-being of all its pupils. A range of professionals, such as the educational psychologist, are involved effectively in helping to ensure that educational provision matches closely the range of pupils' needs.
- 122 The school successfully provides a welcoming, happy environment where working relationships are good so that pupils feel secure, know what is expected of them and recognise that they are valued and included as individuals.
- 123 The school works diligently to ensure parents and carers feel confident in expressing their views and opinions and to recognise that those views will be well considered and taken into account.
- 124 Pupils are given good opportunities to express their views and do so confidently. The school council is well established and councillors have a good understanding of the role they play within the school community and of the contribution they make to decision-making within the school. Councillors undertake their duties conscientiously and act responsibly. They are good ambassadors for the school, are pleased with improvements they have secured and have an agenda for further enhancements they would like to make to the school.
- 125 The school's induction programmes are good. The arrangements for children entering the reception class are carefully planned to involve the feeder nursery

settings and provide an effective period of gradual induction to the school. Parents and carers receive an informative prospectus and induction book during an induction evening that includes presentations by key workers such as the school nurse and after school club representatives. These arrangements support parents and children effectively and as a result the children settle well into school life.

- 126 There are appropriate procedures for pupils joining the school during the school year, so that they quickly learn the routines and understand their responsibilities. A home-school agreement is discussed with children by parents and pupils help to formulate class rules.
- 127 The overall quality of personal support and guidance to pupils is good. A number of professionals enhance PSE sessions well and the quality of support provided for pupils with particular educational, emotional and behavioural needs is generally good. The LSAs have a good knowledge of individual pupils' needs and this helps them deal effectively and sensitively with issues arising during lessons and at lunch times. However, the educational guidance provided by teachers for more-able pupils is not always fully effective in enabling them to fulfil their potential.
- 128 The monitoring of behaviour, attendance, punctuality and performance is effective and early action is taken to deal with any issues that arise. The school has implemented clear policies and procedures to promote good behaviour, which work well. The behaviour co-ordinator makes a valuable contribution to the effective implementation and monitoring of behaviour strategies throughout the school and ensures that teaching, support and ancillary staffs receive regular training in behaviour management.
- 129 Effective procedures are in place to encourage good attendance and punctuality, to ensure pupils' absence is adequately explained and to follow up situations where necessary. The school works in close partnership with the education welfare officer (EWO) to support children and ensure that families experiencing difficulties are well supported.
- 130 Teachers monitor pupils' academic performance and pupils are beginning to take a more active role in the setting and monitoring of their individual targets and in planning their own progress.
- 131 The GB has clear, well-documented procedures, including risk assessment, for promoting pupils' well-being, health and safety whilst in the school's care. However, the inspection team identified some potential health and safety issues; these have been brought to the attention of, and discussed with, the head teacher and governors.
- 132 Pupils are well supervised during break times, and well-established arrangements are in place to deal with any accidents and emergencies. Support staff and mid-day supervisors make a good contribution to the pastoral care of pupils.
- 133 As part of the *Welsh Network of Healthy Schools*, the school is successful in promoting a healthy diet and lifestyle. Fresh water is readily available and pupils are

encouraged to eat healthy snacks. Even the youngest children understand that eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly is good for their health and well-being.

- 134 Pupils have access to a wide range of physical and sporting activities, which contribute significantly to their well-being. The provision of a range of stimulating playground equipment and apparatus provides pupils with excellent opportunities to engage in physical activities during break and lunch times.
- 135 The head teacher, staff and governors work in pupils' best interests to safeguard their welfare and ensure they are adequately protected. The school has an appropriate policy and procedures to deal with child protection issues and this takes into account national guidelines. The head teacher has designated responsibility for child protection and ensures that all adults in the school are aware of the correct procedures to be followed and that training is regularly updated. Good working partnerships have been established with social services and other external welfare agencies.
- 136 The quality of provision for additional learning needs, including SEN, is good. Pupils' needs are identified early and the school works positively to involve pupils and parents in their individual learning programmes. Systematic procedures track pupil progress well and enable provision to be targeted quickly and effectively. These records show the positive impact of the arrangements to support additional learning needs.
- 137 The provision for pupils with SEN is good and meets the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice (CoP) for Wales. Pupils identified at the School Action or School Action Plus stages of the CoP are provided with appropriate IEP's that set suitably challenging and achievable targets. These IEPs are regularly reviewed and they are implemented through support within the class and focused learning programmes during withdrawal sessions.
- 138 A small number of pupils have a statement of SEN. The provision made is in line with these pupils' needs and the arrangements for the annual review of provision are appropriate.
- 139 Good support is provided for the few pupils whose behaviour may impede their progress and that of others. The school is successful in this regard and calls on the advice of specialist services where needed and implements an individual behaviour programme (IBP) where necessary.
- 140 The overall provision to promote equal opportunities is good. All curriculum policies incorporate an equal opportunities and racial discrimination statement. The school has a good awareness of the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and needs and works hard to be an inclusive community. This is well reflected for example in the celebration of different religious festivals, a Welsh week, local studies and through the PSE programme.
- 141 Members of staff successfully ensure that boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum. They are proactive in combating stereotyping and in helping pupils make

informed decisions. Boys and girls have equal responsibilities and take part in the full range of extra-curricular activities.

- 142 The school recognises its responsibility to promote good race relations across all areas of activity through its Racial Awareness Policy and curriculum policies. Assemblies that celebrate the faiths of the pupils within the school ensure that an ethos of respect is nurtured.
- 143 The school's ethos emphasises fair play for all and its arrangements to monitor and eliminate oppressive behaviour, including bullying and all forms of harassment are good. Effective behaviour management strategies, class rules, home school contracts and discipline and behaviour policies ensure that pupils feel safe and secure.
- 144 The school has formulated a Disability Access Action plan and formed a steering group made up of governors, pupils, parents and teachers to address its implementation. The school recognises the need to make adjustments to help ensure any pupil with disabilities attending the school is not disadvantaged.
- 145 The school has an appropriate policy to promote awareness of diversity and its implementation is promoted through appropriate action plans. It builds well on the Cwricwlwm Cymreig and bilingual approaches to teaching as a starting point to foster recognition and greater understanding of the diversity of modern Wales and of the wider world among its pupils. Furthermore, visitors to school, links with China and the study of Islam help to develop pupils' appreciation of other cultures and traditions.

Leadership and management

Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 146 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question Grade 1. The inspection team finds that since 2002 the current head teacher provides exemplary leadership and vision for the school but the impact of leadership roles as a whole on quality and standards remains uneven.
- 147 The head teacher with the strong support of governors provides clear direction, strong values and a renewed vision for improvement. Very well considered managerial systems provide a good framework to promote the full and effective involvement of members of staff in realising the objectives and targets in the SDP.
- 148 The school's mission statement, aims and values promote equality for all and these are increasingly well reflected in the school's ethos. The head teacher provides a clear strategic lead in focusing key resources in line with identified priorities.
- 149 Good account is taken of local and national priorities. This is particularly evident in preparations for the Foundation Phase and the development of an effective transition plan across the local cluster of schools.
- 150 The school successfully meets or exceeds its end of key stage targets for attainment and progress in the development of learning and teaching is particularly evident in the learning environments being developed around the school.
- 151 The procedures for performance management (PM) are in line with national guidelines. They are systematic and there is evidence of the positive impact on learning and teaching of linking whole school and individual targets.
- 152 Good systems for staff appraisal and professional review are now established and the organisation of further professional training for members of staff is very well linked to PM and the school's priorities.
- 153 The GB is strongly supportive of the school and is generally well informed. The arrangements for committees, for nominated governors to undertake designated roles and for the dissemination of information prior to GB meetings are appropriate.
- 154 The GB is appropriately involved in strategic planning although its members are over reliant on information from the head teacher and on occasions from other members of staff. It regularly reviews school policies and finance, agrees end of key stage targets and discusses progress with the SDP. The GB has a broad overview of the quality of education in the school.
- 155 Through the recent review of policies and the provision of updated information for parents the GB ensures compliance with statutory requirements.

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 156 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this key question Grade 1. Although the arrangements for self-evaluation and planning for improvement are good they are at an early stage of development and have yet to impact consistently across the school.
- 157 The head teacher is very well informed about the school's performance. A range of assessment data are systematically analysed and the information is used well to guide the strategic organisation of teaching and to raise standards through for example, focusing resources to improve boys' attainment.
- 158 Subject leaders review performance data and they also make increasing use of the results of standardised tests to help monitor and improve standards further in the core subjects. For example, pupils in KS2 are grouped by ability for English and mathematics but in both key stages the use of assessment information to focus provision is not always sufficiently rigorous.
- 159 The head teacher has established well-organised and systematic arrangements to promote effective self-evaluation. Subject leaders have good opportunities to gather first hand evidence in order to monitor standards but these arrangements are at an early stage of development and the focus on standards is not always sufficiently rigorous.
- 160 The self-evaluation report identifies some strong features and a number of aspects needing improvement, but the overall accuracy of the report is limited. The inspection team agrees with the school's self-evaluation in Key question 1. In contrast it awards one grade lower in Key questions 2, 4, 5 and 7 and two grades lower in Key questions 3, 6.
- 161 The school seeks the views of governors and parents, such as through questionnaires, and takes good account of their views within the self-evaluation process and when setting priorities in the SDP. Furthermore, the school has an enthusiastic school council that makes a relevant contribution to school improvement.
- 162 The head teacher makes good use of the performance management process to clarify whole school and individual targets and the arrangements for whole school and key stage staff meetings help to promote the involvement of teachers in the self-evaluation arrangements.
- 163 Strengths outweigh shortcomings in the effectiveness of planning for improvement since the last inspection in 2002 when key issues were identified to raise standards in key skills and five subjects, to develop the role of subject leader, to improve the quality of teaching and to address health and safety issues discussed with the school.

- 164 Since that time standards have improved in science and music, they have declined in religious education and shortcomings remain in design and technology. Good overall standards are maintained in English and mathematics but achievement in key skills remains variable. The role of subject leader is being developed, variations in teaching remain and positive steps have been taken to resolve the health and safety issues noted.
- 165 Since the appointment of the present head teacher in 2004 clear targets and actions to bring about improvement have been set through a well focused SDP that incorporates a structured review cycle, targets for the short and medium term and appropriate success criteria.
- 166 The positive impact of recent planning is particularly evident in the major improvements to the outdoor environment and in the provision in KS1, including adaptations to the building, to promote learning opportunities in line with the Foundation Phase.
- 167 Whole school improvement targets are set within a realistic timetable and budget planning shows that key priorities are supported through adequate allocation of resources. All members of staff receive training in line with key priorities and as a result initiatives to develop the Foundation Phase and introduce assessment for learning strategies are being introduced. However, the educational initiatives being introduced have yet to become embedded and to impact consistently on standards.

Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 168 The findings of the inspection team differ from the school's self-evaluation in that the school judged this Key question Grade 1. The inspection team did not identify outstanding features; it endorsed some particularly good features with regard to staffing and the provision of resources but found some shortcomings in the provision of accommodation and the use of resources.
- 169 The school is appropriately staffed for the numbers of pupils on roll. Teachers are well deployed, suitably qualified and provide a wide range of subject expertise, experience and skills. Good use is made of their specialist skills in art and music for example and members of staff share additional skills in environmental education and the development of ICT. Overall, LSAs provide good support to pupils. This includes good pastoral support during the lunchtime period when they undertake the role of midday supervisors.
- 170 The caretaker, cleaners, catering and administrative staff carry out their duties diligently and contribute well to the productive and happy atmosphere of the school.
- 171 All pupils have access to a good range of learning resources that are well matched to their needs. The outdoor learning environment is well used. The overall provision of ICT facilities is good. Teachers use inter-active whiteboards to enhance learning well and the pupils are developing their skills well in using this technology.

- 172 The school buildings are generally well maintained and provide a suitable setting for effective learning and teaching. The considerable investment in equipment to provide a stimulating outdoor learning environment in the small outdoor play areas creates an impressive feature. Furthermore, much has been done to create aesthetically pleasing and usable gardens in the grounds adjacent to the demountable buildings and to adapt indoor facilities to provide for the Foundation Phase.
- 173 The school site is divided by a right of way that is open to public access at all times. This situation imposes constraints in ensuring the safety and well-being of all who need to transfer between buildings during the course of the school day.
- 174 Taken overall, effective and efficient use is made of most resources. In general the management of workforce remodelling is having a positive impact. The school is developing appropriate plans to implement teaching and learning responsibilities (TLR) in 2009. The arrangements to provide teachers with time during the school day for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) tasks are well organised. However, the deployment of support staff to provide teaching during PPA time and to deliver a rotation of indoor and outdoor learning activities in KS1 does not sufficiently enhance standards.
- 175 Despite the good provision of laptops for example, the use made of ICT resources is sometimes limited and this reduces the quality of pupils' learning experiences.
- 176 There are good arrangements in place to manage and promote the professional development of members of staff through internal, local and nationally based courses. A positive feature is the achievement of qualifications by the caretaker and an LSA to enable them to contribute to the curriculum in art and ICT. Teachers are encouraged to apply to the General Teaching Council of Wales (GTCW) for grants to support their professional development and the whole staff is actively involved in developing the school's curricular provision in line with national changes.
- 177 The school manages its finances well and ensures that spending priorities are matched closely to the SDP. There are appropriate procedures to ensure value for money and subject resources are regularly audited. Governors receive regular financial reports and are clear about their responsibilities with regard to financial planning and administration.
- 178 Taking into account the maintenance of good standards in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection and the increasingly positive impact of the head teachers' drive and vision in encouraging members of staff to improve learning and teaching further, the school provides value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Under-fives

Language, literacy and communication skills

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 179 Children listen to stories with enjoyment and interest, especially those written and read to them by older pupils. They confidently follow and read stories with the class teacher in English and Welsh. They listen well with interest, speak with increasing clarity, use a good range of vocabulary and share their ideas and opinions clearly with peers and adults, for example about their class visit to the church.
- 180 Children enjoy mark making. They use pencils, felt pens, paint and chalks with increasing skill to write menus for their café, holiday lists and questions to ask in the church for example. Their writing shows increasing accuracy in letter formation and the use of 'finger spaces.'
- 181 The children respond to and use Welsh naturally throughout the day in routines and in their work.

Shortcomings

- 182 There are no important shortcomings.

Personal and social development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 183 Children settle into school routines quickly. They show increasing independence as they find resources during structured play sessions, use the clipboards appropriately, tidy their role play area and take their turn to deliver the registers to the office. They have a good understanding of healthy eating, recognising many fruits and choosing to eat them during the regular 'fruit stops.' They show great care and concern for their hamster 'Hammy' taking their turn to take him home, feed him and clean out his cage. They sing " nos da " to him in class as he's put to bed for the day.

Shortcomings

- 184 There are no important shortcomings.

Mathematical development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 185 Children's mathematical skills are well developed. They recall a number of counting songs and rhymes and play mathematical games confidently, for example 'snakes

and ladders.’ They order numbers accurately in English and Welsh and count on in tens and back to zero. They confidently use their arms and hands to model the plus, equals and minus signs when adding and taking away. They sequence the days of the week, know the order of seasons and match teddies to the number of plates during their role play picnic.

- 186 The children recognise nine, twelve and two o’clock on the clock, as the start of the school day, dinner time and fruit stop time. They read a pictorial graph well, stating how many choose a favourite fruit, using and understanding appropriate mathematical language, such as more and less. They confidently use money to buy their fruit during ‘fruit stops.’ Their understanding of capacity develops well as they use balancing scales to weigh objects and fill buckets with scoops of sand.

Shortcomings

- 187 There are no important shortcomings.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 188 Children have a good understanding that churches and chapels are special places. They identify items found in the church, for example the cross and organ, and understand something about their relevance. They have a developing knowledge of religious festivals and recall that they made bread to celebrate harvest and special cakes at Easter.
- 189 The children use the smart board and computer confidently, pressing icons, and clicking on and dragging images with the mouse. They successfully use a simple paint programme to ‘paint’ a church and design Easter cards for example. They use technology with ease to listen to stories at their listening table
- 190 Children know that their hamster is nocturnal and recall the life cycle of the butterfly well. They recognise and name a variety of home grown and exotic fruits and talk about their sense of taste and smell well. Their understanding of the seasons is good.

Shortcomings

- 191 There are no important shortcomings.

Creative development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 192 Children’s creative skills are good. They enjoy listening to a range of music and sing a variety of songs in English and Welsh. They respond enthusiastically to the song ‘Summer Holiday,’ move expressively to the rhythms and beat, and sing ‘We are

going to the seaside' well, using un-tuned percussion instruments correctly to enhance their performance.

- 193 The children enjoy role play in their 'Brynhyfryd Holiday Cottage' and through their 'small world' play activities. They have a good understanding of texture and colour in art and use an interesting range of materials to create imaginative images. They also build realistic constructions from 'lego.'

Shortcomings

- 194 There are no important shortcomings.

Physical development

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 195 Children's' fine motor skills are good. They use pencils, crayons, brushes and scissors correctly and with confidence. They use small resources, including 'lego' and jigsaws with fine dexterity and handle larger spades and buckets well to dig and build their sand castles. Their gross motor skills are well developed. They move confidently on the timber trail, balancing on the bench, jumping over small hurdles and crawling through the tunnels. They skip with ropes and ride on tricycles and develop push and pull movements well on an exercise bike. Their spatial awareness is good as they move to music in the hall, walking, running and moving at different levels.

Shortcomings

- 196 There are no important shortcomings.

Mathematics

Key stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
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Key stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
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Good features

- 197 Pupils in KS1 quickly become familiar with number symbols and start to recognise sequences and patterns. They confidently undertake simple addition and subtraction sums and show a growing knowledge and recall of number bonds.
- 198 Pupils in Year 1 demonstrate quick and accurate recall of number bonds to 10 and understand the methods and symbols used in addition and subtraction. They

interpret a bar graph about favourite pets for example and successfully count coloured cubes and colour a bar graph accordingly.

- 199 In Year 2, most pupils know the five and ten times tables and understand the use of a tally chart when recording and presenting information. By the end of the key stage most pupils tell the time correctly, identify a good range of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and use standard and non-standard units of length and mass appropriately.
- 200 In lower KS2, pupils develop a good understanding of place value to 1,000 and beyond. They have a sound recall of mathematical tables and are confident in computation using the four rules of number. Their skills in using mental strategies and problem-solving skills are developing well.
- 201 In Year 3 and Year 4 pupils have a sound understanding of symmetry, distinguish between clockwise and anti clockwise quarter turns and relate this well to right angles. They develop their understanding of angles well, identifying acute, obtuse and reflex angles. More able pupils use numeracy skills well to solve real life problems in tailoring holiday costs to a budget.
- 202 In upper KS2 pupils enthusiastically use numeracy skills to calculate number sentences to make 42, for example. They recall mathematical formulae quickly to calculate area and perimeter of both regular and irregular two dimensional shapes. Some more able pupils recall previous work on mode, median and mean and when posing mathematical questions they demonstrate a sound knowledge of measurement, calculating average and percentages and show a good understanding of area, perimeter and volume.
- 203 Previous work indicates that by the end of KS2 pupils acquire good skills in number calculations, they understand the relationship between fractions and decimals and acquire good skills in measurement, working with shapes and handling data. They develop a good mathematical vocabulary and develop problem-solving skills well.

Shortcomings

- 204 There are no important shortcomings.

Science

Key stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
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Key stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
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Good features

- 205 Pupils in KS1 develop a good understanding of scientific investigations. They know how to create a fair test and they predict and record their findings accurately. They have a growing scientific vocabulary and experiment well.

- 206 Pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 discover where seeds can be found in a variety of fruits. They know how to record their findings and confidently share the knowledge they have gained with their peers and teachers.
- 207 The majority of pupils record their findings confidently and often illustrate their experiments well to support their written work.
- 208 In KS2 pupils relate their science activities to projects that they are following. For example, work on erosion in geography. They develop their scientific skills well and produce work of a good standard that indicates appropriate understanding of electric circuitry, forces, floating and sinking and aspects of the natural world and life processes.
- 209 Older pupils in KS2 apply their knowledge of electrical circuits well to create models that light up. They further their understanding of circuits by incorporating a switch in the circuit. They have a good understanding of the workings of a strong and healthy body and this is reflected well in the good quality of illustrations in their work.
- 210 Throughout the school pupils follow a simple structure of planning investigating and recording results. As they progress they write with greater detail using a good range of scientific vocabulary.

Shortcomings

- 211 There are no important shortcomings.

Design and technology

Key stage 1: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Key stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Good features

- 212 Pupils in KS1 develop design skills well. They investigate the uses of different materials when making models such as space rockets and progress to producing simple structures that have moving parts. They gain appropriate understanding of the processes of planning, designing, making and refining their work.
- 213 In lower KS2 pupils produce cards and books with moving parts such as 'pop-ups.' They plan and execute their designs effectively, learn to evaluate their work and to suggest the use of different materials, for example to improve the design of their products.
- 214 In upper KS2 pupils successfully devise games and produce prototypes. They plan and develop the rules of the game and construct it well using card wood and plastic. They incorporate materials they consider their games would require to produce a sustainable product.

- 215 Older pupils in KS2 incorporate simple electrical circuits into their model lighthouse, cars and games. They work well as individuals and collaboratively in groups to produce well finished products and make reasoned evaluations of their work.

Shortcomings

- 216 Pupils' skills in control technology are underdeveloped in both key stages.

Music

Key stage 1: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
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Key stage 2: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
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Good features

- 217 Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy performing, composing and appraising music. The quality of singing is good overall. Pupils sing in tune with good expression and diction. They have a varied repertoire of songs and hymns in English and Welsh that they perform with enjoyment. They listen intently to a wide repertoire of music.
- 218 In KS1 pupils begin to develop a good understanding of tempo, dynamics and duration. They repeat clapping patterns and create innovative rhythmic patterns using voice and body percussion and movement. They internalise rhythmic patterns and understand the importance of silence in musical composition. Pupils create interesting compositions with non-tuned percussion and introduce imaginative word patterns. Pupils' evaluate their own work with 'two stars and a wish' and evaluate each others' work with good musical reasoning.
- 219 In KS2 pupils sing pieces, for example 'Chairs to mend,' in two parts with good expression. They maintain pitch well and compose their own street cries with a good understanding of dynamics and tempo. They perform their compositions with voices and tuned and non-tuned percussion instruments confidently and evaluate their own and others' work using appropriate musical vocabulary. Pupils experiment well with voice and instrumental percussion to create musical descriptions, for example 'slimy snakes'. They create a graphical score and perform and evaluate each other's work well.
- 220 The school choir sings with due regard to pitch, dynamics and breathing to a variety of audiences and in local, county and national venues. The standard of performance is high. A good number of pupils receive string, brass and woodwind instrumental tuition and they perform to a high standard.

Shortcomings

- 221 There are no important shortcomings.

Religious education

Key stage 1: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Key stage 2: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
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Good features

- 222 In Year 1 pupils develop appropriate knowledge of religious symbols, for example the cross in Christianity and the Star of David in Judaism. They know that the Torah scroll is a sacred text to the Jews. Previous work in Year 2 indicates that pupils can retell the story of Easter and know this is found in the Bible.
- 223 In KS2 discussions and previous work indicates that pupils have some knowledge of religious festivals and creation stories. In lower KS2 they learn about Islam through questioning a visitor showing that they understand the Qur'an is the holy book of Muslims and that Ramadan is a period of preparation for Eid. They begin to make comparisons with Christian festivals.
- 224 In upper KS2 pupils further their knowledge of religious customs and rituals appropriately, such as through comparing stories about the birth of Jesus and studying Jewish artefacts and religious observance. They identify the responsibilities of adults and begin to relate these to religious teachings.

Shortcomings

- 225 In both key stages pupils' knowledge of stories, personalities and teachings from both the Old and New Testament is underdeveloped.
- 226 Across the school pupils' knowledge of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths is not secure enough for them to appreciate the influence of religious faith on the way many families live today.

School's response to the inspection

The governors, head teacher and staff are very pleased that the inspection team found Victoria Primary to have the characteristics of a good school. The report highlights an ethos of mutual respect, confirms that pupils have positive attitudes to learning, their behaviour is good and through enhanced provision the school is increasingly successful in meeting their needs.

The inspection findings also indicate that Victoria Primary is an improving school where overall standards are good. This confirms the good standards reported to parents in the school's end of Key stage NC results.

We are very pleased indeed that the children in the Reception class achieve good standards across the areas of learning and that the provision we make successfully enhances their education. This endorses our work in preparing for the introduction of the Foundation Phase.

We are very proud that the report highlights the effective involvement of children in the decision-making processes of the school. The School Council and The Eco Committee are recognised as good ambassadors for the school so confirming our belief that children's views are important.

It is particularly pleasing to note that inspectors judge our managerial systems to provide a good framework for the involvement of all members of staff in realising the objectives and targets of the school. We believe the arrangements made to promote whole school developments will enable the school to continue to improve.

The report highlights the consistency of teaching in lower Key stage 2, where learning and teaching were judged to be rigorous and effective, but also highlights some variations in the quality of teaching across the school. This is acknowledged and will become a major focus for our SDP. We will now share our existing good practice in a bid to reach the WAG targets for teaching in 2010.

An action plan will be put in place to address the recommendations in the report.

This will focus on:

- raising standards in religious education and design and technology;
- improving the effectiveness of educational guidance for able and talented children;
- ensuring greater consistency in learning and teaching through the sharing of good practice;
- implementing schemes of work fully and
- embedding current initiatives including *Philosophy for Children*, assessment for learning, self-evaluation and the role of subject coordinator.

A copy of the action plan will be sent to all parents and carers and progress in implementing the plan will be reported in the governors' annual report.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Victoria Primary School
School type	Community Primary
Age-range of pupils	4 – 11 years
Address of school	Lower Harpers Road Abersychan Pontypool
Postcode	NP4 8PW
Telephone number	01495 772637

Head teacher	Miss Joy M. Dando
Date of appointment	1st September 2004
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs Isobel Yacomén
Registered inspector	Mr Michael T. Ridout
Dates of inspection	9 th – 11 th June 2008

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group									
Year group	N (fte)	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number of pupils	-	30	29	35	33	33	34	33	227

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	9	3	9.8

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding nursery and special classes)	23 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in nursery classes	n/a
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	n/a
Average class size, excluding nursery and special classes	28
Teacher (fte): class ratio	1.23 : 1

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to inspection		
Term	R	Rest of school
Summer 2007	91.8	92.0
Autumn 2007	92.0	94.4
Spring 2008	87.2	94.0

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	15
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	3

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 1:

National Curriculum Assessment KS1 Results 2007			Number of pupils in Y2:					34
Percentage of pupils at each level								
			D	W	1	2	3	
English:	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	18	61	21	
		National	0	3	14	63	20	
En: reading	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	18	26	56	
		National	0	4	15	55	26	
En: writing	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	21	61	18	
		National	0	5	16	68	11	
En: speaking and listening	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	18	61	21	
		National	0	2	11	64	23	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	18	70	12	
		National	0	2	11	65	22	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	18	70	12	
		National	0	1	9	66	24	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 2 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	82.4	In Wales	80.1

D Pupils who have been disapplied from the statutory arrangements
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 2:

National Curriculum Assessment KS2 Results 2007						Number of pupils in Y6:					25
			D	A	W	1	2	3	4	5	
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	4	68	28	
		National	0	0	0	1	4	16	50	29	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	8	64	28	
		National	0	0	0	1	3	15	50	30	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	4	64	32	
		National	0	0	0	0	2	12	53	32	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 4 in mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	92.0	In Wales	74.1

D Pupils who are excepted under statutory arrangements from part or all of the National Curriculum
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

- The inspection team consisted of four inspectors and a Peer Assessor appointed by Estyn who worked for nine inspector days (over three days) gathering first-hand evidence. In total, 36 lessons or parts of lessons were observed, in which standards and teaching were graded. Inspectors also evaluated the pupils' work.
- The head teacher took the role of nominee, ensuring effective communication with the inspection team. The nominee attended meetings with inspectors and contributed fully to the discussion of inspection evidence.
- Inspectors observed registration sessions, school assemblies and break-times. All teachers present were observed teaching. Discussions were held with members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, representatives of the GB, parents and others, both during the initial inspection visit and during the inspection.
- All the available work and records of a representative sample of pupils was scrutinised. Inspectors sought the views of a number of pupils in discussions with them.
- A large amount of documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection.
- The registered inspector held a meeting attended by eleven parents before the inspection and considered 23 parents' responses to a questionnaire. More than 90 per cent of responses to the questionnaire were positive.
- At the end of the inspection, the main findings were discussed with the head teacher. A short time after the inspection, meetings were held with the head teacher, members of staff, and the governors, to report the findings of the inspection. A representative of the LEA attended the latter meeting.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr. Michael T. Ridout Registered Inspector	Context Summary Recommendations Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve? Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment? Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management? Mathematics; Religious education.
Mrs. Ann Williams Team inspector	Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards? Assessment aspect of KQ2. Under-fives; Music.
Mr. Glyn Scott Team inspector	Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community? Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources? Additional learning needs aspect of KQ4. Science; Design and technology.
Mrs. Janet Warr Lay inspector	Aspects of Key Questions: 1, 3 and 4.
Mrs. Susan Evans Peer Assessor	Participation in the full range of inspection activity and making a contribution to inspection judgements.
Miss Joy Dando Head teacher and nominee	Liaison with inspectors, contributions to team discussions and the school's response.

Acknowledgement:

The inspectors wish to thank the governing body, staff, parents and pupils of the school for their co-operation, assistance and courtesy before and during the inspection.

The Contractor for this inspection was:
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